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CIA-VIET NAM--AN AP NEWS ANALYSIS

EDUCATED BUT--THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY FINDS ITSELF ASSAILED FROM BOTH SIDES--IN VIET NAM--FROM CRITICS IN THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS IN WASHINGTON. MALCOLM W. BROWNE, AP CHIEF CORRESPONDENT IN SOUTH VIET NAM FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, HAS MAINTAINED A CLOSE WATCH ON CIA ACTIVITIES. HE FILED THIS ANALYSIS FROM TOKYO, WHERE HE IS ON VACATION.

BY MALCOLM W. BROWNE
ASSOCIATED PRESS STAFF WRITER

CIA-VIET NAM

AN AP NEWS ANALYSIS

TOKYO (AP)--WHEN JOHN RICHARDSON BEGAN HIS ASSIGNMENT AS CHIEF OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY UNIT IN SOUTH VIET NAM, HE HAD TO USE BUDDHIST MONKS TO CHASE THE GHOSTS OUT OF THIS VILLA.

THE SPECTER OF A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUDDHIST GHOST HAS BEEN A MAJOR FACTOR IN RICHARDSON'S RECALL TO WASHINGTON.

IN FACT, ALL THE AMERICAN SPOOKS (INTELLIGENCE MEN) IN SOUTH VIET NAM HAVE COME UNDER CLOSE AND CRITICAL SCRUTINY--NOT ONLY FROM THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT BUT FROM U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AS WELL. A NEW MAN WITH A NEW MISSION MAY SOON OCCUPY THE SMALL OFFICE ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE EMBASSY, WHERE RICHARDSON WORKED.

RICHARDSON'S RECALL IS BELIEVED PARTLY THE RESULT OF A DISAGREEMENT OVER TACTICS WITH AMBASSADOR HENRY CABOT LODGE, WHO CAME TO SAIGON IN AUGUST.

PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM AND HIS FAMILY HAVE CHARGED THAT THE CIA ACTUALLY PLOTTED A COUP TO OVERTHROW HIS GOVERNMENT LAST MONTH. THE U.S. EMBASSY CALLED THE CHARGE NONSENSE.

BEHIND ENDLESS CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES, HOW MUCH OF A ROLE HAVE AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES HAD IN DEVELOPMENTS IN VIET NAM?

UNDER FORMER AMBASSADOR FREDERICK W. NOLTING JR., RICHARDSON AND HIS MEN HAD A KEY ROLE. AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE AMBASSADOR HE WAS A CLOSE FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE OF MOST OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT'S TOP OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE SECRET POLICE.

RICHARDSON AND THE 200 OR SO CIA AGENTS UNDER HIS COMMAND WERE IN ON THE GRAND STRATEGY FOR SMASHING THE COMMUNIST GUERRILLA INSURGENCY. SAIGON POLITICS WERE SIDELINES.

THE U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES IN SOUTH VIET NAM ACTUALLY WERE A MILITARY ARM OF THE CIA. LATER, SPECIAL FORCES (CAPS S, F) WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND HEADED BY GEN. PAUL D. HARKINS, AND BECAME A REGULAR UNIT.

SPECIAL FORCES HAD A VITAL PART IN SECURING VIET NAM'S JUNGLE-COVERED HIGHLANDS. SIX-MAN TEAMS IN SOME AREAS ADMINISTER ENTIRE VILLAGES. APPROVED FOR RELEASE 1999/09/07 : CIA-RDP75-00001R000299410102-6
MEN HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES.

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